

HOUSE JOINT RESOLUTION 124
By Johnson P

A RESOLUTION to honor and congratulate Mr. Gary Merritts on his selection as Teacher of the Year by Cheatham County Schools.

WHEREAS, it is fitting that the members of this General Assembly should pause to specially recognize those outstanding teachers who have devoted their careers to providing the highest quality education for Tennessee's students; and

WHEREAS, Mr. Gary Merritts is one such estimable educator, who has distinguished himself as a professional of the greatest talent, ability, and integrity; and

WHEREAS, Gary Merritts has recently been selected Teacher of the Year by the Cheatham County Schools, an honor most befitting his outstanding tenure as a teacher as it recognizes the positive influence he has had on so many young lives; and

WHEREAS, born in Altoona, Pennsylvania, Gary Merritts has been a woodwind player since the 4th grade; he started out on clarinet, and the versatile Mr. Merritts switched to saxophone at the request of his high school band director; and

WHEREAS, Gary Merritts received his Bachelor's Degree in Music Education from Tennessee Technical University in 1976; and

WHEREAS, Gary Merritts has served with acumen and alacrity as a teacher in Cheatham County for 26 years, first being hired to direct the Harpeth Middle School Band in

1979, then being hired by Harpeth High School in 1985, where he built the band program at that school virtually from scratch; and

WHEREAS, Gary Merritts is an extremely talented and compassionate educator who works assiduously to motivate his students to reach their full potential, both as scholars and as citizens; under his excellent direction and guidance, Harpeth High School Marching and Concert Bands have consistently received Excellent and Superior ratings, have been selected State Finalists for 11 of the last 17 years, and individuals and ensembles from the band have won numerous marching, concert, ensemble, and individual awards at Festival and State Competitions; and

WHEREAS, Gary Merritts truly serves as an inspiration to his colleagues and students alike, and his friendship and counsel are highly valued by those who are fortunate to know him; and

WHEREAS, in addition to his work with Cheatham County Schools, Gary Merritts is also the choir director at Pegram United Methodist Church, where he is also the Worship Committee Chairman; he is the Executive Secretary for the M.T.S.B.O.A., plays saxophone in the Nashville Wind Ensemble, and is a member of the NBA, MENC, TBA, TEA, CCEA, Phi Mu Alpha, and Phi Beta Mu; and

WHEREAS, his many professional accomplishments aside, Gary Merritts is most appreciative of the love, support, and companionship he shares with his wife, Jamie, and daughter, April; and

WHEREAS, Gary Merritts truly epitomizes the ideal of the dedicated teacher who is wholly committed to the highest ideals of public service and quality education for all, and he should be specially recognized; now, therefore,

BE IT RESOLVED BY THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES OF THE ONE HUNDRED THIRD GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE STATE OF TENNESSEE, THE SENATE CONCURRING, that we hereby honor and congratulate Gary Merritts on being chosen as Teacher of the Year by Cheatham County Schools, commend his exceptional service to the

children of Tennessee, salute his professional expertise and personal excellence, and wish him all the best in his future endeavors.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that an appropriate copy of this resolution be prepared for presentation with this final clause omitted from such copy.